

## **Session 4: Importance Of a Library Association: IAMSLIC**

*Moderator: Sally Taylor*

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS: WHY AND HOW IAMSLIC ADDS VALUE TO YOUR LIBRARY: SPC PERSPECTIVE**

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#### **Abstract:**

This paper looks at the significant relationship Secretariat of the Pacific (SPC) Library has had with IAMSLIC over the last five years of their partnership. What are the benefits of such networking that have helped improve access to valuable resources? The paper will also discuss the “before and after IAMSLIC” networking in SPC’s service to meet the user’s needs and the relevance of IAMSLIC in the region. Examples will also be drawn from around the region and the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROP) that network with IAMSLIC and their experiences with the challenges and solutions to effective service delivery. The paper will also focus on the use of IAMSLIC resources and added values such as Document Delivery, ILL and training that is made available to SPC and the region.

**Keywords:** Information services, library networks, partnerships, information management, libraries, International Association of Aquatic and Marine Science Libraries and Information Centers (IAMSLIC), Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Pacific.

The extent of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community’s (SPC) coverage in terms of service delivery to its member countries is an enormous task considering the wide areas of sea, land and air in the Pacific Island countries. The region has a total landmass of more than 551,312 km<sup>2</sup>, with a population of about 10 million (SPC 2013) and with different languages and cultures. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community is the only regional organization that covers and services all 22 Pacific Island Countries and Territories with technical assistance, capacity building training and research. The Pacific is geographically surrounded by oceans therefore our source of livelihood is our land and our ocean.

This is best summarized in the words of the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands in delivering his speech at the United Nations Conference of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) held in Samoa in September 2014, “For us in the Cook Islands, conservation of the ocean is part of our DNA. We were born into the ocean and we will die in the ocean. Our lives are so interconnected with the sea” (Puna, 2014).



Figure 1. Map of The Pacific Islands. Source:  
[https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/File:Pacific\\_Map.png](https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/File:Pacific_Map.png).

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community Library's mission statement "[t]o achieve excellence in the collection, storage, preservation and retrieval of information to meet the research, learning and instructional needs of the SPC staff" (SPC, 2011) reflects the services that the Library provides. This mission statement is the driving force for which the Secretariat's Library exists and it is mandated by its governing bodies, the Conference of the Pacific Community and the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administration (CRGA) (SPC, 2011).

The SPC Library is a private corporate library that aims at enhancing and servicing SPC's professional and technical staff, its projects and programs. The SPC Library also operates and functions regionally and internationally in association and partnerships with information service delivery organizations to fulfil its role in providing:

- Promotion and enhancement of information access and service delivery to SPC member countries and territories.
- Information resources in research and current awareness.
- Acquisition service delivery.
- Information management.
- Updating of serials for the IAMSILC Z39.50 list.
- Contributions to the Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA).

The International Association of Aquatic and Marine Sciences Libraries and Information Centers (IAMSILC), consisting of more than 300 members from more than 80 countries, plays an important role in aquatic and marine information resource sharing based on personal connections amongst its members (Butler et al., 2006).

The SPC Library and IAMSILC association and partnership was established back in 2006. This partnership has had an enormous impact on the organization in terms of document and service delivery in equipping our staff with the much-needed information required to carry out their duties.

The SPC and IAMSILC partnership has provided many welcome benefits. It has given SPC the opportunity to interact and communicate with international counterparts for information. This has greatly benefitted the SPC Library service delivery both internally and externally to its member countries. Prior to joining IAMSILC, information in aquatic resources and marine sciences was limited to what countries could afford. Such services come with costs, hence the establishment of this association and subsequently the development of the relationship with IAMSILC has provided a “one stop shop” with diversified information management and delivery in its discipline.

As Karn and Das (2009) noted, “[a] network usually consists of formal arrangement whereby materials, information and services provided by a variety of libraries and other organizations are available to all potential users.” SPC’s arrangement with IAMSILC has made document delivery readily available for SPC staff, member countries and their users via the Z39.50.

Such benefits not only enhance service delivery and empower the Secretariat’s staff but also assist our Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) by providing:

- Access to IAMSILC Z39.50 Distributed Library borrowing privileges.
- Access to Union List of Marine and Aquatic serials.
- IAMSILC membership benefits.
- Consultations with international professionals.
- Easy and free access to costly journal articles.
- Resource sharing – e-document delivery, ILL, exchange lists, training.
- Assistance to small libraries.
- Networking and development of long-term partnerships.

Information resource sharing is one of the many ways to increase availability of documents through our associations while minimizing expenses, which for many of our fisheries libraries in our PICTs is always a challenge. The association with IAMSILC has truly added value to SPC Library and its document delivery by providing:

- Accessibility of SPC ‘s fisheries newsletters and information bulletins.

- Invaluable opportunities to partner/associate/network since funding is a challenge in many libraries.
- Access to information sources, e.g. Z39.50 and Union List of Marine and Aquatic Serials.
- Increased efficiency – requests go directly to individual lenders.
- Use of a compatible catalogue in the Distributed Library.
- Partnership and networking.

This association adds to the SPCs Library service delivery with:

- Guidance and support for networking opportunities.
- Sharing of resources.
- Assistance to libraries with funds and expertise to set up library systems using ICT to ensure wider access to marine and freshwater sciences.
- Efficient use of professional networks (IAMS LIC) to supplement traditional ILL services.
- Making SPC materials more visible.
- Enhancing user/client satisfaction.

The figures below illustrates why and how the IAMS LIC/SPC association has been very beneficial to our clients. The graph in Figure 1 illustrates the borrowing requests submitted to IAMS LIC by SPC, SOPAC (now part of SPC) and PIMRIS for the last five years.

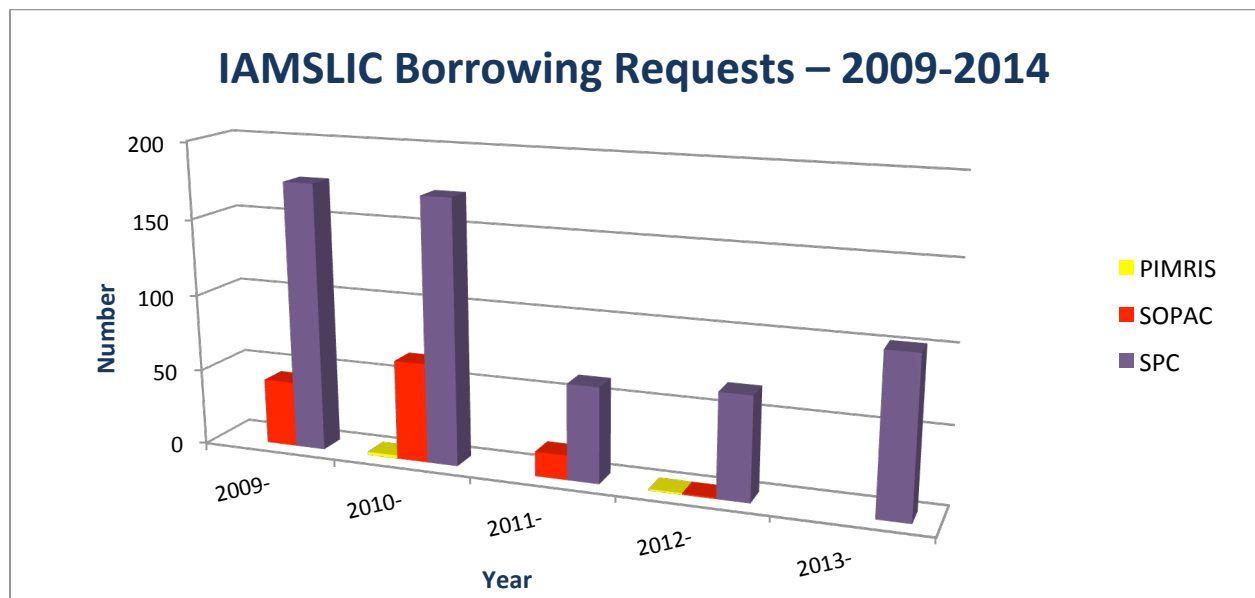


Figure 1: Borrowing requests to IAMS LIC for the last five years. Source of stats:

<http://www.iamslc.org/ill/stats.php>.

For the SPC Library, its association with IAMS LIC has tremendously enhanced its service and document delivery to its staff. Even though there was a big drop in 2011-12 (which could be attributed to staff turnover in key library positions that oversee the SPC borrowing requests to IAMS LIC), these services have again picked up and will continue to increase as the “friendship” becomes healthier.

In Figure 2 below, note that New Caledonia has so far during 2013-2014 placed more than 100 requests via the IAMS LIC Z39.50. SPC headquarters is based in Noumea, New Caledonia, accounting for the large number of requests from the SPC Library. This has been a great increase from 2011 and 2012 as per Figure 1 above.

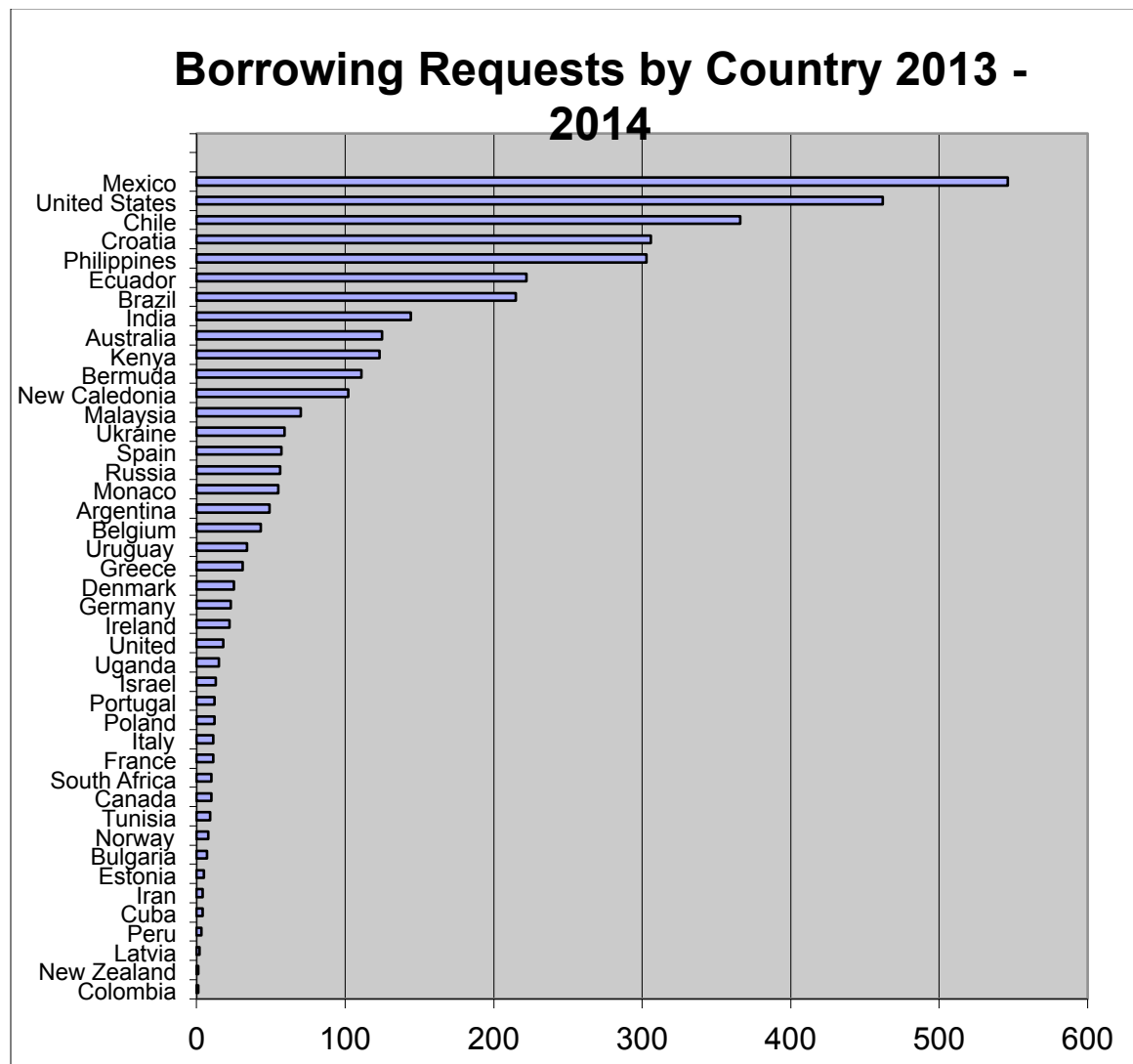


Fig. 2 Borrowing requests by country. Source stats: <http://www.iamslc.org/ill/oldstats/index.php> – IAMS LIC Z39.50 Distributed Library – Resources Sharing Statistics (2013-2014 Transaction Statistics: Excel Spreadsheet Analysis).

Building a strong library association and partnership is the way forward in providing access to information to our SPC community and the region as a whole. As mentioned in Bradley (2012), “[l]ibrary associations are advocates for equitable access to information, and help to build strong, sustainable

Library communities by improving services for library users, and supporting development of the profession.”

Therefore, the way for this SPC/IAMSLIC association to flourish and be of great benefit to SPC staff and its member countries is to positively strengthen:

- Networking and collaboration.
- Marketing of the IAMSLIC Z39.50.
- Sponsorship.
- Use of regional and international information networks for resource sharing (PIMRIS, IAMSLIC, PEIN).
- Use of the PIRG listserv to facilitate communication.

The SPC /IAMSLIC association and collaboration is a highly active and connected partnership, providing information seekers in the SPC community with the information they need to effectively carry out their work. Butler et al. (2006) best summarize the SPC/IAMSLIC connection and commitment to sharing information: “IAMSLIC members are committed to sharing resources and respond to the needs of professional colleagues sometimes in spite of institutional policies, such as cost recovery and priority users.”

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